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RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 VIENTIANE 000332

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS (WEYER), INR, CA/OCS/ACS/EAP
BANGKOK FOR USAID MACARTHUR, RMO, CDC, REO WALLER
HHS FOR EELANDER
PASS TO USTR AND USAID DCARROL

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SUBJECT: AVIAN INFLUENZA: LAO WEEKLY REPORT NO.27

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Announcement of H5N1 in Laos

1. (U) During the visit of Dr. Nabarro, FAO Representative Leena Kirjavainen on behalf of Lao Agriculture Minister Siene announced to the donors that Dr. Webster's group had found the H5N1 virus in some Vientiane ducks. Although the Minister has not heard this directly from Dr. Webster, he said the GOL has taken "active measures" to monitor and control the area.

2. (U) We told Dr. Webster that the Minister is expecting formal notification of the discovery. He in turn asked the Ambassador to formally notify the Ministers on his behalf, which she did by letter today.

Visit of Dr. Nabarro

3. (U) Dr. David Nabarro, UN System Senior Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza briefed donors on April 4, 2006 on the meetings in Beijing and the upcoming meeting of "Partners" in early June in Vienna. Nabarro said he was impressed with the quality of the GOL pandemic plan. While more work needed to be done, it was one of the better plans in the region. Nabarro said he was also impressed with both the Lao Ministers for Health and Agriculture, with the Lao Presidential Decree on AI issued in December and with donor coordination on the ground in Laos. He also indicated that Laos was in a better funding situation than many other countries, with adequate funding from bilateral donors and the World Bank. He singled out the United States for special thanks on this front.

4. (U) Nabarro said he had several questions for the Asia region, which he hoped to have answered: Why is it difficult to get ministries of health and agriculture to coordinate? What makes the Vietnam program relatively successful? Why have we found it difficult to work with governments to intensify communication with the people --

especially in China? What can we do to move the process forward in Laos, where we have not yet had a new major outbreak? Nabarro made a strong pitch for continued donor cooperation and transparency. He also asked the World Bank to take the lead by meeting with donors and sharing results from the Bank's upcoming appraisal team, which will decide on \$10 million worth of IDA grants, EU and Japanese assistance to be disbursed in Laos. Our AI Coordinator has been asked to join the assessment team. At the meeting, UNICEF announced that Japan was contributing an additional \$1.4 million to Laos for AI.

15. (U) The Ambassador asked that Nabarro, who had a meeting scheduled with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Lengsavad Somsavat today, to raise the issue of delays in getting MOUs (required for all NGO aid projects) approved through the MFA. Nabarro agreed and stressed the need again to get the assistance moving.

Formal Donor Meeting

16. (U) During a formal GoL sponsored Donor Meeting held on April 6, 2006, the Minister of Health, Dr. Ponmek, restated his commitment to a GoL donor relationship based on transparency, and partnership. Dr. Nabarro suggested that every country needs:

- a strategic plan, with short-term and long-term goals, which Laos has.
- clarity on a comprehensive technical approach to the threat -- the capacity to deal with animal infections, surveillance, alerts and culling. He emphasized the importance of communications with the public as key to any success in combating the AI Pandemic Threat. Laos has a way to go.
- management arrangements with emphasis on identifying POCs to monitor and report. Laos has begun setting up the

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requisite organization to manage donor relations, coordination, and progress on implementation.

- direct working relationship with stakeholders. Laos is working toward this but should provide clearer guidance.
- to ensure there is communication, transparency and harmony among all the stakeholders. One way is to establish a "partners" group. Laos is not there yet.
- flexibility to deal with evolving situations. Laos is not there yet.
- implementing the program plan while still designing -- "build the boat, while sailing it." Laos is not there yet.
- translate the strategic plan into action and develop next steps, including a National Action Plan. This can be accomplished through joint appraisals, monitoring and critiques. Stakeholders are key to insure success. Laos is not there yet.

17. (U) The GOL announced it has developed an organizational structure to deal with implementing its strategic plan and for channeling donor inflows. This newly created National Avian Influenza Coordinating Office (NAICO) will manage donor cooperation and overall coordination. They will be setting up a special account to manage donor funds, of which only the EU and the World Bank will participate so far. Dr. Ponmek stressed that the GoL was appreciative that each donor has its own accounting structure with different transfer, spending and reporting requirements, which the GoL will respect.

18. (U) Dr. Ponmek indicated that the MoH has recommended GOL approval of the MOU with HHS/CDC, regarding the designated Infectious Disease/AI Country Coordinator, Dr. Andrew Corwin. He publicly expressed his support for the overall MOU.

USAID and USDA Visit

19. (U) John MacArthur (USAID Infectious Diseases Advisor, Bangkok) and Russ Nicely (USDA, Bangkok), visited Vientiane for Dr. Nabarro's visit. Dr. McCarthur introduced the new USAID supplemental plan intended for Laos, which will total approximately \$3 million dollars in additional resources. Russ Nicely identified a "local partner" for a proposed Wet Market Workshop, for the August - September 2006 timeframe. Both the FAO and Project Care were recognized as having the capacity to stage a workshop, and established MOUs. Russ Nicely also discussed how to best position someone from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in Laos. One model being considered is an arrangement mirroring that of the HHS/CDC Infectious Disease/AI Coordinator.

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